

given to GTM for donating the t-shirts and Cox Communications for their generous support. A quarter of a million dollars raised by K-State Proud over the course of 3-plus years emphasizes the enormous impact this campaign has had on K-State's student body. The results are real and undeniable.

K-State Proud allowed a student whose hometown of Greensburg, Kansas, which was destroyed by a tornado, to stay in school despite the enormous loss of life and property. K-State Proud provided support to a cancer survivor that would otherwise have had a difficult time completing a college degree. K-State Proud provides these financial awards while also providing the recipients with an emotional boost to overcome their struggles. Money is a necessity, but knowing that someone recognizes your pain and is there to support you is very powerful as well. This sense of community, that we're all in this together, has made K-State Proud a huge success. Some people worry about the future of our country. When I see the K-State Proud movement at work, I realize that there is a new crop of compassionate, principled leaders preparing themselves to better our State and our Nation.

K-State Proud has become a model for other universities searching for a way to unite their student bodies and communities. People familiar with K-State know how special this university is. It is only fitting that the rest of this country learns how special it is as well. I urge you to tune in to the basketball game this Saturday and witness this student body's commitment to each other.

I have used the word "proud" many times in these remarks. I'm the proud father of two current K-State students. I'm proud to be associated with such great ambassadors for our State. And I'm proud to be a Kansan. In this case I'm proud to be a K-State Kansan.

#### WOMEN FARMERS BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Equality for Women Farmers Act, a bill Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO of California and I have introduced. It aims to close an ugly chapter in our history and end a systematic legacy of discrimination at the Department of Agriculture.

Our bill provides a process for women farmers who have experienced discrimination to make claims against a compensation fund appropriated by the Congress. It requires USDA to institute the much-needed reforms that will end this shameful gender discrimination in their loan system forever.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, there are approximately 300,000 women farm operators across the United States, which is over 17 percent of the family farmer population.

This is by far the largest group of minority farmers in the country, and their numbers are growing. And yet new census data recently revealed that women farmers have been consistently underreported by USDA over the past 15 years. Worse, it is estimated 43,000 women farmers have been discriminatorily denied more than \$4.6 billion in farm loans and loan services from the USDA over the years. In fact, by USDA's own reckoning, women have seen less than their fair share of loans in every single State in the country.

Like male farmers, tens of thousands of women have gone to local offices of the Farm Security Administration over the years to file loan applications and ask for this government's help in sustaining their family farms. But there the differences often end. Many women have been told that money or applications had run out even though men seem to be finding them with no trouble at all. Others were told to return to the loan office with their fathers or husbands or brothers so that the men could file the applications on their behalf. Still others were told that "farming is not for women" or saw their applications filed in the trash right before their eyes. Some were even subjected to crude and horrible advances by loan administrators who demanded a sexual quid pro quo in return for approving their loans. This is simply not right. It is beneath us and it must end.

To his credit, Secretary Vilsack has initiated a task force to look into these and similar civil rights issues at USDA, but we also need to move here in the Congress and quickly, if nothing else so that these women can get the resources that they now need to preserve their family farms in this troubling economy.

Unfortunately, this subject of discrimination by USDA loan and credit officers is not a new one. In fact, only 2 years ago Congress was so moved by the lengthy history of discrimination and long-pending lawsuits brought by minority and socially disadvantaged farmers that we addressed the situation in the 2008 farm bill. That provision urged the Bush administration to settle those discrimination lawsuits brought by women and other minority farmers.

Just last week the Obama administration announced that it had reached an agreement to settle the remaining claims for African-American farmers who experienced similar discrimination. While I applaud the administration for recognizing the need to settle these important claims, I am dismayed that they did not come forth with a more comprehensive proposal to settle claims for women, Hispanic, and Native American farmers who have suffered similar prejudice.

It's time for us to own up to the mistreatment of women and other minority farmers as well. They have had to deal with needless, mindless discrimination as they have tried to preserve

their family farms. This Congress should grant them the compensation and the damages they are due.

What would the bill do? It establishes a compensation fund of \$4.6 billion for these farmers. It sets up a Special Master in the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to process, review, and adjudicate their claims. The Special Master will award eligible claimants who were denied loan applications or whose applications were not acted upon \$5,000 in damages.

For eligible claimants who were denied farm loans, loan benefits, or loan servicing, whose damages are presumably greater than those denied applications, the Special Master may also award additional damages based upon the application of a formula described in the legislation.

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For those who will seek to apply for loans and loan management in the future, the legislation will ensure that their requests are finally considered equally with all others. This is a matter of fundamental fairness. And action cannot come soon enough for these women who have suffered under these discriminatory practices. So please join me in being part of this solution. We can help make whole these women who have suffered so much, and we can make USDA a better resource for our nation's family farmers for generations to come, regardless of their gender, race or origin.

From our earliest days, the small family farm has been considered the bedrock of this nation, the font of its virtue and its citizenship. "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God," wrote Thomas Jefferson, "if ever He had a chosen people." Our Founding Fathers strongly believed our government should be there to help America's family farmers, not to undermine them at every turn.

As such, it is time to do right by all of these family farmers that have been discriminated against in our past and present. And I invite my colleagues to join with us to reach a solution to settle these discriminatory claims. It is time to live up to our founding principles, to do right by our family farmers no matter what their race or sex, and to legislate an end to this unfortunate and regrettable era.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE ABSURDITY OF STIMULUS PROJECTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.